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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, *September* 10 1695.

Queſt. 1. *A Lady of my acquaintance, has a long time been at me, to get her nativity calculated for her, I have met her ſeveral times, perſwading her it was a ſin, but ſhe is not willing to believe it, but every time ſhe ſees me, is at me to get it done for her; pray your opinion in your next* Mercury, *whether it is lawful or not, and if it is, who you would adviſe me to go to, in doing of which you will much oblige both*, &c.

Anſw. In ſome of our former *Mercuries*, we have fully declared our opinion of *Aſtrology*, and the reaſons why we give ſo little credit to it, to which papers we refer this queriſt.

Queſt. 2. *A Gentleman having loſt the deareſt friend by death, is ſo over-preſt with the grief which the remembrance of the loſs cauſes, that his life is a burthen to him, therefore he deſires your charitable advice how he may gain ſome conqueſt over his Melancholly.*

Anſw. This Melancholy is ſuch an inſinuating ſort of a diſtemper, that tho thoſe who are troubled with it find ſome uneaſineſs, yet they have ſo much ſatisfaction in it tho unaccountable, as very often makes them unwilling to part with it; this makes the cure difficult; but where perſons are once reſolved againſt it, they won't find it an unconquerable companion. In this caſe we think it the hardeſt becauſe no poſſeſſion can be more juſtly valuable than that of a tender deſerving friend; yet as we are reaſonable perſons, the Reflection that all the grief in the world is uſeleſs and won't recall 'em, will ſomething prevail, and that as Chriſtians we ought to be ſatisfyed with the hand of God Almighty, who may juſtly take as well as give: tho this alone will ſcarcely be ſufficient: therefore the perſon ſhou'd for ſome time be continually either in buſineſs or diverting himſelf, according as his circumſtances require.

Queſt. 3. *I have heard much talk by ſome Travellers of the cuſtom of the* Leopard *amongſt the* Negroes, *but don't know certainly what it is, if there is really any ſuch thing; I deſire the favour of you to acquaint me with it, and the manner of it.*

Anſw. Hiſtorians give us an account that there is certainly a very pleaſant cuſtom concerning the *Leopard*, amongſt thoſe ſort of people, performed after this manner; they call this beaſt the King of the *Foreſt*, and becauſe this pretended King treats his ſubjects very cruelly and often makes great waſt in the Neighbouring countries, the inhabitants are always at continual war with him. But when the people of any town where their King lives not, have taken a *Leopard*, they are obliged to carry him to the place where he keeps his Court. And the inhabitants of the town where their King lives, thinking it a ſhameful thing that a *Leopard* taken by other perſons, ſhou'd enter into their town without any reſiſtance, they go and meet thoſe who bring the *Leopard*, and offer them battail, and on the other ſide thoſe who come with him, looking upon it to be a point of honour to force their paſſage, ſtand ſtill and expect them: They firſt go to fifty cuffs, and afterwards being a little warm'd they fall to fighting with ſticks, and flinging of ſtones. When they are weary with fighting, if thoſe who bring the *Leopard* have the worſt of it, there comes a man from the King who introduces them into the town, and leads them into the Market-place where all the people are aſſembled: Then they take of the ſkin of the *Leopard* and give that and the teeth of it to the King, and afterwards boyl its fleſh and diſtribute it to the people, who keep all that day as a ſolemn Feaſt. The King himſelf eats none of this fleſh, becauſe he ſays no one muſt eat his own likeneſs, he likewiſe believes 'twou'd be an ill preſage for him if he ſhou'd ſit or walk upon the skin of this Animal, and to avoid this misfortune he ſeis it immediately. He makes preſents of its teeth to his women, who hang them in their cloaths, and make Necklaces mixt with coral of them. When the men of the village where the *Leopard* is taken happen to be in a very ſmall number, and have not courage enough to make this *Bravado*, they addreſs themſelves to others who are more expert than they, and having found one amongſt them who is ſtrong enough to carry the *Leopard* into the Kings town, he takes two or three other reſolute men with him, and watching an opportunity when they ſee no body, he enters by night into the town and lays the *Leopard* in the middle of the Marketplace; having done this he retires into the houſe of ſome of his acquaintance, untill ſome body has ſeen the *Leopard*: He who perceives it firſt, goes crying through the whole town. *They have brought hither another King without letting us know any thing of it.* And all the people allarmed at his cries gather together; then he who brought the *Leopard* diſcovers himſelf, and each man laying his hands on this perſons ſhoulders, go, ſay they to him, *you are a man in whom we may truſt in caſe of need, we are all witneſſes of what you can do.*

Queſt. 4. *It hath been often with me to trouble you with a queſt. But not having an opportunity when it has been in my mind, I have afterwards forgot it, and ſo born till now at which a freſh occaſion preſents it ſelf, and doth neceſſitate me to require your anſwer with that Equality and reſpect to Religion, as the merit of the caſe admits off; it is as follows. A young woman for beauty paſſable having an Eſtate left her upward of* 1000 l. *by ſome uncle or the like kin, has by the importunity of her mother and other friends engag'd her ſelf to her ſiſters husbands brother, who is agreeable to her neither in Education, Temper, or Phyſiognomy, which contract or Engagement doth now trouble her, and cauſes ſome doubts (by reaſon of theſe contrarieties) of their mutual agreement, and is therefore much diſconſolated putting it as a queſtion to her ſelf, whether ſhe has beſt to marry him or not, tho ſome contracts have been made betwixt them.*

But beſide this, there is a perſon that is much more Equal to her in the formentioned reſpects, and doth believe that he could attain her conſent with much more ſatisfaction to her, than ſhe can have in the former; now Gentlemen, what I requeſt of you is, what is beſt to be done in this caſe, i. e. *whether in point of conſcience the young man may endeavour love, and whether ſhe may with ſafety leave the former upon thoſe doubts and Circumſtances, tho all has been done except the Ceremony? pray make no reference, but let your anſwer be poſitive and with ſpeed, for it is of importance to many perſons.*

Anſw. If this contract was made ſince ſhe was of years of diſcretion, and ſhe ſeemed to agree to it, 'tis ſtill of force, but if 'twas extorted from her we believe ſhe is not bound to ſtand to it, tho ſhe muſt not flatter her ſelf with an imaginary conſtraint; her conſcience will be her witneſs, whether ſhe was willing or no, and ſuch things are too ſacred to be trifled with: tho ſuppoſing this obligation was entered into with her conſent, if the lover will ſet her at liberty, ſhe may yet be free; for the ſervant that wou'd be, he muſt not pretend in the leaſt to her, till ſhee's abſolutely diſengaged.

Queſt. 5. *Sometime ago I had frequent opportunities of converſing with a young Gentlewoman of about* 18, *whom I liked moſt extreamly well, ſhe having as much Beauty, Wit, and good Humour as I wou'd deſire; which made me ſo deſirous of her Company that I endeavour'd to get more of it, than in prudence I ought to have done, inſomuch that her friends began to ſuſpect there was Love between us,*

us, or at least on my side, and therefore took effectual courses to deprive me of her conversation, till when I never knew I was so much in Love, but A separation awaken'd my affections and gave birth to a violent Passion, which put me upon means of corresponding with her by Letters, which we have done for sometime to my great satisfaction. Now I'm a younger Brother and can onely maintain my self like a Gentleman, which I have honestly acquainted her with, and yet she seems to have no aversion, for me, but she having no Portion till after some friends death, it may be some years before we can conveniently marry; I desire your advice, whether we shou'd in the mean time actually contract our selves or no, or whether we shou'd depend onely upon each others Love and Honour for our mutual security till that happy, happy, time shall come, when we may with discretion marry?

Qu. 2. *May not a single man that's a good husband live very gentilly in the Inns of Courts, upon fourscore or* 100 l. per Annum, *and how much money ought he to have with a wife, to enable him to live as handsomely and in as much plenty when marry'd as he did before, considering the expences of a family, and the Provision that ought to be made for Posterity?*

Answ. 1. The time must be happy indeed when prudent persons meet, who really love each other; but to the question. In such a case as yours seems to be, where there's honesty and sincerity, a contract is useless, for your mutual loves is sufficiently obligatory, and to honest persons such reciprocal favours bind as much as all the vows in the world, tho cou'd it give a fuller satisfaction on either side, we think 'twou'd be unkind for the other to refuse it.

Answ. 2. If fourscore or an hundred a year won't maintain an honest man gentilly in any place, four thousand won't do't, for that will not only provide necessaries but conveniencies also. Yet the state of Matrimony requires much more, there's an hundred expences that an unmarryed man can't once think of, tho were the question here, how much an Idle Gentleman of the Inns of Courts, Justly deserves with a wife, our answer wou'd be, nothing at all, for we think no discreet person will venture her mony in such hands; but as 'tis only how much fortune is necessary for him to have with a wife, to maintain a family as well as this hundred a year does him at present, we answer six thousand pound is the least penny he can take, and that little enough too without good management.

Quest. 6. *Be pleased to favour us with your opinion in the following queries, and you will much oblige your humble servants*, &c.

1. *Whether or no (as some report) there be worlds in the* Sun, Moon, Stars, *&c. and whether inhabitable. Whether (if any) those worlds was created before our Inhabitable World, or our world before theirs. Whether Christ dyed for those worlds, as well as ours, or whether they be under a state of Sin and Mortality?*

Answ. We have so little certainty of these matters, that we shall e'ne leave 'em as we found 'em, only in the rank of probabilities; nor shall we pretend to say any thing of the State of their inhabitants, before we know whether they have any or not; we look upon all such enquiries to be foolish as well as useless, since they are not only indeterminable, but cou'd they be discover'd after a long search, it wou'd be no way necessary to our happiness to know them.

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